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Does Alcohol Exacerbate Mental Illness Struggles

Louisville Addiction Treatment Center - November 30, 2021

It isn't uncommon for people to recommend 'drowning your sorrows' when you have had a bad day or something has been a bit tricky. More importantly, it is common when people seem stressed, upset, or down.

Unfortunately, we know that alcohol is a depressant, and when you add that slowing of the brain to a brain that is tackling mental health issues, the result can be disastrous.

Groups of people heading out for a Friday night drink are the norm, but some in the group can be dealing with far-reaching issues. If you or a loved one is struggling with alcohol addiction, there is support for alcohol addiction recovery.

The combination of mental health issues and alcohol can be more serious.

Does alcohol exacerbate mental health issues?

People suffering from mental health issues, primarily undiagnosed or unmedicated, are more likely to reach for drugs and alcohol to help them feel better. Sometimes it starts with a glass of wine or beer at the end of the day and then slowly increases over time.

Using alcohol as a coping strategy is common for people with mental health problems, but it is detrimental. Alcohol is a depressive substance that can harm our mental well-being and our physical health in the short and long run.

Alcohol can cause people to become irritable, short-tempered, forgetful, and irrational. Combined with a mental health condition, these emotions and actions can be even more significant.

People who have mental health issues often cite the reason for using alcohol or drugs to help them sleep. Mental health issues are known for causing sleep issues and lowering the quality of sleep people can get.

While alcohol may assist promote sleeping temporarily (i.e., the first part of the evening), it is more likely to cause sleep disruptions in the latter part of the night, when our sleep cycle is the most active.

Sleep is essential for good mental health and wellbeing, and not getting enough of it may have a detrimental effect on daily functioning and lower our overall standard of living.

Alcohol depletes the brain's natural anxiety-relieving chemicals. The effects are so extreme that we become dependent on alcohol to cope.

We know alcohol impairs our critical, logical, and rational thinking. This is why drinking increases the chance of aggression, aggressive conduct, and illogical decisions.

How can alcohol abuse impact mental health?

When depressed or lonely, they frequently turn to something other than friends and family for comfort – most commonly, alcohol or drugs.

Most people are unaware that they are attempting to manage a mental disorder with alcohol early. Early warning signs can be vital in spotting and seeking treatment for mental health problems treated with alcohol.

- Depression could become more visible or more severe.
- Irrational judgments and muddled thinking
- Difficulty acquiring new knowledge and skills
- Irritability
- Concentration problems
- Memory issues
- Personality changes and mood swings
- Anxiety could become more prominent or worsen.

You may also notice that you or your loved one becomes more secretive and goes to great lengths to hide things. Often they are hiding their drinking and will use excuses to drink in secret.

If you spot these in your friends, family, or you, you must seek an accessible rehab treatment center that offers all of the things you need to see yourself on the road to recovery.

The cycle of mental health issues and alcohol is complex for many to overcome, self-medicating and drinking to become numb, tired, or 'not feeling,' and then guilt and sadness. All of that causes the person to drink more, and a painful and addictive cycle has begun.

Research shows that alcohol is one of the most significant contributors to lower self-esteem. This becomes part of the spiral into an addiction that needs urgent treatment from a facility that offers a range of options, like telemedicine.

Low self-esteem can take many forms, and many addicts use alcohol as a means to give themselves a temporary increase in self-esteem. This is short-lived and can cause a myriad of issues. An alcohol detox is the only way to begin treatment and make it through to the other side of their addiction.

When mental health issues are combined with alcohol, the effects on the addict and those around them can be monumental. This is why seeking treatment to help is one of the most important things you can do for yourself or your loved one.

Treatment clinics are aimed to provide people with the tools they need to handle their mental health difficulties in a more positive and healthy manner. To finish detox, you may need to stay in a facility and participate in a program that provides around-the-clock assistance and tailored therapy. Alternatively, you may be ideal for an outpatient program.

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